

## Spring 2010 - TSK Online Program – The Self in Question: part 3

### Week 3 - Guide

Last week we looked at the possibility of a knowledge that goes beyond the self, beyond positions and conditions. As I suggested in the phone call, one way of looking at this is that space can allow knowledge directly. This is in contrast to our ordinary view, in which space is the container for objects that exist ‘over and against’ the bystander, who ‘does’ the knowing.

This week we focus more on the way this shift can be implemented, on how “a new vision or a new understanding could open from within the confines of the ‘bystander’s’ world” (270). We start with a critique of reason as a way to engage such knowledge, and then turn to the power of inquiry inquiry.

One aspect of the vision that comes out clearly in this chapter is the close integration of all of its parts, especially as they are presented in Love of Knowledge. The discussion of reason makes clear that reason is linked to polar knowledge and descriptive knowledge. There is no mention here (p. 269) of intentional desire, but I am reminded of what Hume had to say about this: “reason is and ought to be the slave of the passions.”

The move made in this chapter is to look with fresh eyes at the way that the bystander knows, instead of just taking that way of knowing for granted. By taking this approach, we do not have to turn away from the bystander or reject it’s role. We simply have to be able to inquire into its operations. If we think back to the image of the bubble, which I discussed in the phone call, and which can be found at the end of chapter 31 of LOK, we could put it this way: if we can ‘become’ the bubble or inhabit the whole of the bubble, we are no longer trapped within the bubble. That is what we are aiming at.

As for the specifics of doing this, the second full paragraph on p. 270 (starting with “In the same way”) gives some very clear suggestions. We will look at it more closely in next week’s phone call. The other key insight, developed toward the end of this week’s reading, is that we can look at positions “as expressions of knowledge,” as “positionings” rather than positions.

None of these possibilities will mean very much if we automatically assign the capacity for knowing to the self. For this reason, this is a good point to be practicing LOK Ex. 5, Disowning Tension. Practice in everyday situations as well as in more formal expressions. In each case, the focus is on the idea that the self is part of what is given in each situation, rather than a bystander to the situation. I’ll ask about your experience with this practice in our phone call.